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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews and summarizes the findings of studies that examine the effects of race as a counselor-client variable in the counseling relationship. The first major grouping of the paper deals with studies on the preferences, attitudes, satisfactions, depth of self-exploration, and reporting of behavior and language patterns of the client. The studies encompass elementary students, high school students, college students, and adults. The second major grouping of the paper outlines the findings of studies about counselor prejudice and facilitative functioning. The preference, attitudes, and satisfaction expressed by clients with counselors of different race tend to point in the direction of expressed preferences for counselors of the same race, particularly black counselees. The ability of the counselor to communicate empathic understanding appears crucial regardless of racial considerations. The summary statement includes implications for future research, theory, and practice. (Author/LAA)

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Race as a Counselor-Client Variable in Counseling and Psychotherapy:

A review of the research

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Race as a Counselor-Client Variable in Counseling and Psychotherapy:

A review of the research[1]

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In recent years, increased attention in the literature has been devoted to race as a variable in counseling and helping relationships, particularly in regards to black clients receiving help from white counselors (Vontress, 1967, 1970, 1971; Thomas, 1970; Grier and Cobbs, 1968). While these writings have contributed meaningful insights to the counseling profession, quite often the observations have not been based on empirical data. While the effects of client-counselor personality variables have been investigated (Jones, 1968; Mendelsohn and Geller, 1963; Mendelsohn, 1968), there is a relative lack of serious research devoted to race and social factors in client-counselor interactions (Banks, 1972). The purpose of this paper is to review and summarize the findings of studies located that bears on the effects of race as a counselor-client variable in the counseling relationship. For convenience, the studies have been grouped under two major headings: (1) Effects on clients and (2) Effects on counselor. The summary statement will include implications for future research, theory, and practice.

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Effects on Clients

Preferences, Attitudes and Satisfaction

High school students. The effects of the presence of a black counselor and type of problem upon the helpers preferences on white high school students was investigated (Eiben, 1970). A questionnaire was used to gather data from students in four types of high schools: Type A--white student body, private, small city, no black teachers or counselors; Type B--integrated urban, black teachers and counselors; Type C--rural white, no black teachers or counselors; and Type D--white, small city, black and white teachers and counselors. For various problems or concerns, students were asked to respond as to the "source of helper" they would seek: (a) black counselor; (b) white counselor; (c) black friend; (d) white friend; (3) black teacher; (f) white teacher. Where the focus of group participation was on the improvement of race relations, black counselors were preferred in all four schools. The presence of black counselors in Type B and D schools did not increase the students' choice significantly for a black counselor compared to schools Type A and C. In short, white counselors were preferred for most problems that concerned the students except in the area of race relations.

The effects of the (1) race of model and (2) the age of model, on the vocational-educational planning behaviors among 105 eleventh grade black students were investigated (stugart, 1970) through random assignment to four experimental groups and one control group: (a) black peer model; (b) white peer model; (c) black adult model; (d) white adult model; and (3) an active control group represented the fifth group. Models were

depicted on booklets with pictures and narrative explanations of the model's activity. Experimental groups were exposed in one day to different (age and race) models performing identical information-seeking behaviors while controls were exposed to no models. Measures of frequency in performance of the modeled information seeking behaviors were obtained after an interval of 12 days. The rewarded model produced more vocationally-relevant behaviors than control procedures but differences relative to race and age of the model were not obtained.

In studying the effects of race and dialect of the communicator upon attitude formation, black and white high school students in two midwestern cities were presented tapes of: (a) white communicators "general American dialect"; (b) white communicator "southern dialect"; (c) black communicator "general American dialect"; and (d) black communicator"southern dialect" (Lehman, 1969). Semantic differential and Likert type questionnaires were used to assess attitudes of respondents toward communicator. Analysis of variance was used in assessing attitudes of the subjects on four independent variables, two levels each: race of communicator (black, white); dialect of communicator ("general American,""southern dialect"); race of student (black, white) and sex of student (male, female). The subjects were found to be more positive toward the communicators with the "general American dialect" than toward those with the "southern dialect." More positive attitudes were expressed toward the Caucasian communicator than toward the black. "Southern dialect" was rated significantly less positively when used by the white communicator than by the black. Subjects tended to rate their own race more positively. Impli-

cations were drawn as to the possible influence of race and dialect of counselor in counseling relationships.

A questionnaire designed to measure junior high school students' satisfaction with their counselor was completed by 2,000 students, 161 of whom were black (Mims, Herron & Wurtz, 1970). Analysis of responses of the blacks were the object of this study which was conducted in two nonadjacent suburbs in Detroit where the black students were a distinct minority. Each school had black and white male counselors and white female counselors but no black female counselors. The investigators concluded that counselors of black students do not have to be black but rather sex is suggested as a more important consideration than race. For example, the data suggested that black junior high school girls do not want a female counselor. Black boys had a similar degree of unhappiness with black male counselors and white female counselors. A limitation of the study is that black female counselors were not a part of the counselor population.

The differences were studied between the attitudes of black high school students toward their white counselors and the attitudes of white students toward the same counselors (Burrell & Rayder, 1971). A sample of 50 seniors (10 blacks and 40 whites, both groups divided equally by sex) who had visited their counselors at least three times were asked to react to a 12-item attitude schedule, each item rated on a 5-point continuum ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Using chi square to analyze by race, results indicated that the black student responses and attitudinal statements toward the counseling situation were significantly lower ($P<.001$) than responses of white students.

College students. Sixty-four undergraduate students, half black and half white, participated in three counseling sessions after which they responded to questionnaires and instruments designed to measure pre- and post- comparisons of preferences of counselors varying in professional experience; ethnicity; and sex (Tucker, 1969). Counselees had less difficulty viewing the experienced counselors positively regardless of race or sex. However, counselors who differed from their counselees in sex and racial membership are less preferred with choices as follows:

SEX AND RACE	FIRST AND SECOND CHOICE
1. Black Females	1st Black Males
	2nd Black Females
2. Black Males	1st Black Males
	2nd White Male
3. White Females	1st White Male
	2nd White Female
4. White Males	1st White Male
	2nd White Female

A study of the personal characteristics of four white and four black counselors and its relationship to counselor facilitative effectiveness as viewed by 48 randomly selected black college sophomore students revealed

that counselors of different levels of education, experience, and race can function as effective change agents (Gardner, 1970). However, black college students perceived that black counselors would be able to function at higher facilitative levels with black students than white counselors. ($P<.01$). The view is supported that counselors who generate high levels of facilitative conditions offer the greater potential to be helpful to blacks than those counselors who generate low levels of facilitative conditions.

In three separate samplings involving three different projects, SEEK (Search for Education, Exploration and Knowledge) students were surveyed to determine their attitudes and opinions regarding the importance of the ethnic backgrounds between counselor and counselee (Backner, 1970). The first survey involving 115 of 325 students revealed that only 12.7 percent of the students endorsed a counselor of the same racial background as being a desired quality as compared to 25.3 percent desiring counselors of same sex. In the second sampling, 174 or 44.8 percent out of 408 questionnaires were returned from SEEK students about one and one-half years later. Only 25.3 percent stated that the counselor's ethnic background should be similar to counselees while 68.4 percent stating that it didn't matter. However, Backner (1970) states that a "greater percentage of students did indicate that their counselors ethnic background was important to them, but the large majority continued to indicate that it was not [p. 633]." In a third survey, in which the questionnaires were distributed under less controlled conditions 30 out of "probably a hundred or a hundred and fifty [p. 634]" were returned. Twenty-one students responded

that the ethnic background of the counselor did not matter. It is concluded from the three samplings that most SEEK students during the period of the survey felt that similarity of ethnic background between counselor and student doesn't matter.

Adults. Among the conclusions of an investigation into the nature of the counselor-client relationship as perceived by 39 adult unemployed and/or underemployed culturally different clients in a pre-employment program, was that the racial similarity between counselors and counselees is the factor effecting individual counseling relationships when professional training and sociological characteristics of counselors are equal. (Taylor, 1970).

In a study of black youth who were enrolled in a job project and the factors related to their success, Gurin (1968) examined the general issue of "whether the reaction of a trainee to a staff member is affected by the degree of similarity between staff members and trainee, similarity in terms of class background, values, cultures and sympathies [p. 26]." Using a series of rating scales, Gurin assessed trainees' perceptions of 93 black male counselors and 51 white male counselors with respect to: (1) trainees' attraction to staff member; (2) trainees' perception of staff member's influence; (3) trainees' perception of staff members' knowledge; (4) trainees' perception of staff members' punitiveness; (5) trainees' perception of staff members' stress on middle class behaviors. Trainees were asked to indicate their perceptions of other staff members on the same scale--100 black male basic education teachers, 32 white male basic education teachers, 54 black male vocational educational teachers, and 20 white male vocational education teachers. There was greater attraction

toward black male counselors than white counselors ($P<.01$). In presenting the findings, Gurin observes:

> What we see very clearly when the data are presented . . . the race of the staff members makes a very critical difference in the counselor role but no significant difference in the other roles. When compared to the white male counselors, the black male counselor was much more attractive to the trainees under him and was perceived by them as having more knowledge and influence. The differences are large and significant. In contrast, when black and white education and workshop teachers are compared, the differences, though in the same direction, were clearly not as large or significant. Whether or not the staff member is black or white does seem to matter in a role that requires a relationship of trust and personal closeness. It matters less in roles that are less personal and where the major focus is on information and skills that have to be taught [p. 27].

Gurin also suggests that trainees react differently to program staff "socialization" attempts when they come from black rather than white staff members since the results indicated that trainees reacted more favorably to these behavioral pressures when they came from a black staff member.

Pre and post attitudes of black clients toward white counselors and the effects of counselor race on goal persisting behaviors were analyzed on 191 unemployed black males (N=75) and females (N=116) in a large midwestern city who were trainees in three manpower programs: (1) Work Incentive Program; (2) Concentrated Employment Program; and (3) a Board of Education Skills Center (Harrison, 1972). Assigned to 19 counselors, 6 black (trainee N=53) and 13 white counselors (trainee N=139), data was collected by black interviewers using questionnaire formats and two instruments: (1) The Consequences Model Questionnaire developed by Rosen and Komorita (1969), an adaptation of Edward's (1961) decision making parodigm of subjective probability and subjective utility, and (2) Gurin's et al (1968) modification of Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Locus of Control Scale. Pre measures revealed an overall favorable attitude toward white counselors before the counseling experience. Post attitude measures

revealed a significant ($P<.01$) negative attitude of black counselees assigned to white counselors and a more significant ($P<.001$) negative attitude toward white counselors by black counselees who had black counselors. Client subscribing to more militant ideology and those more blaming of the system were less favorable in their attitude toward white counselors ($P<.05$). Effects of counselor race on goal behaviors of counselees were non-significant. Interpretations were that experience sensitized counselees to the limitations of white counselors and to the positive aspects of black counselors, suggesting they became pro-black rather than anti-white.

Depth of Self-Exploration

Elementary students. The effects of the race of the group leader upon the improvement in intergroup attitude was investigated among racially mixed elementary school children (Owens, 1969). Sixty 5th and 6th grade students were pre-tested on the Semantic Differential, the Ohio Acceptance Scale, and the Self Esteem Inventory. Ten children (five black and five white) were randomly assigned to each of six groups: one lead by a white counselor, one led by a black counselor, and one group led by a black and white counselor. Three control groups were of the same composition. The experimental groups (one, two, and three) engaged in group counseling and the control group (four, five, and six) engaged in contact activities. Experimental and control groups met once each week for 40 minutes over an eight week period after which subjects were administered the same instruments used during the pre-test. No significant differences were found among the six groups in mean gains in intergroup attitudes.

Among racially mixed fifth and sixth grade elementary school students, the use of racially mixed teams of counselors in group sessions revealed that there may be no advantage over using either a black counselor or a white counselor working alone as a means to alleviate racial attitudes.

High school students. Thirty-two males (16 black clients, eight lower class and eight middle class; 16 white clients, eight lower class and eight middle class) high school students in the eleventh and twelfth grade were randomly selected and assigned to eight counselors (four black and four white) in a Latin Square design to investigate the effects of race and social class on counselor-client interactions (Banks, 1971b). Counselors were divided into high and low empathy groups based on pre-ratings. Dependent variables were rapport ratings and client depth of self-exploration. Racially similar pairing resulted in greater client self-exploration in initial interviews ($P<.05$). Empathy, however, which proved to be a source of effect for more positive outcomes were derived from high empathy counselors rather than low empathy clients ($P<.05$), regardless of race. Unlike race, social class was not a significant source of effect.

College students. The hypothesis that clients who are counseled by counselors who are more similar to them (race, sex, and language) will be able to explore self more and to make greater progress was tested through taped one-hour interviews with 37 black male and female students in special programs for culturally disadvantaged using five black counselors and nine white counselors (Grantham, 1970). Random assignments were made so

that each counselor was scheduled to see two males and two females. Four instruments were used in the study: (1) a slang test--40 multiple choice items measuring the counselor comprehension of nonstandard English; (2) Client Outcome Questionnaire (COQ)--a measure of client satisfaction; (3) Depth of self-exploration scale (DX); and (4) Counselor Facilitative Conditions Scale (FC)--measure of counselor functioning in the interview. Language was not found to be a significant variable. Two significant findings were: (a) black counselors were preferred by subjects over white counselors to a significantly greater degree; and (b) female counselors were preferred to a greater degree than were male counselors.

Adults. The initial clinical interviews were recorded on four groups of hospitalized black and white female patients (N=16) diagnosed as schizophrenics from upper and lower calss status to study the effects of race and social class of therapist upon depth of self-exploration. (Carkhuff & Pierce, 1967). Subjects were assigned to black and white upper and lower class counselors (N=4) who saw each patient in a Latin Square design counterbalanced to control for the effects of order. Race and social class were significant sources of effect on patients depth of self-exploration ($P<.01$). Patients most similar to the race and social class of the counselors tended toward more exploration of self.

Fourteen white teachers and ten black parents were subjects in a investigation to explore the efficacy of training as a means of facilitating relationships between the races (Carkhuff & Banks, 1970). Both black and white subjects increased their functioning in interpersonal

skills. Trainers of a given race functioning at high facilitative levels can significantly effect gains in trainees of similar and different races. However, white tended to function at slightly higher levels with white adults and children. Blacks tended to function at slightly higher levels with black adults and children. The authors indicate that the results ". . . reflect perhaps some generalized greater facility in communication with persons who are similar in characteristics [Carkhuff & Banks, 1970, p. 417]."

Reporting Behavior and Language Patterns

High school students. The effects of the race of inexperienced lay counselors were tested with black junior high school students (Heffernon & Bruehl, 1971), Four black and four white college men who had no counseling experience were given eight hours of training in Rogerian principles of counseling. Each counselor was assigned two groups, each made up of three black eighth grade boys matched by I.Q., reading level, seventh grade attendance records, and grades. Assessment of reaction to counseling were made by: the result of giving counselees a choice at session five between reporting for counseling or going to the library; and measurement of pre- and post-counseling change on a 69-iterm version of the Mooney Problem Check List, the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory, and an adjective check list describing real- and ideal-self. No systematic differences were observed on the paper and pencil instruments, but on the behavior measure, all of the counselees of black counselors chose to report to counseling rather than go to the library, but only 11 of 23 counselees ($P<.01$) with white counselors chose to report for counseling.

The conclusion was that the behavioral measure showed a greater preference for black counselors, interpreted in terms of perceived counselor-counselee similarity.

Adults. A comparison was made between the number of counseling interviews held by 12 white counselors and one black counselor with black and non-black disadvantaged clients in the outreach units of the Michigan Employment Security Commission (Tourangeau, 1970). The study to determine the effectiveness of white middle class employment counselors in "reaching" disadvantaged black and non-black individuals as determined by the races of interviews. No differences were found in the average number of counseling interviews held. Although there were considerable differences among counselors in their "success" in dealing with clients, when race was ignored there was considerable variance between counselors in the number of interviews held.

In the natural setting of the employment interview, research was conducted to determine whether white and black employment interviewers elicit the same or different language patterns from lower class black subjects (Ledvinka, 1969). Tape recordings were made of the interviews of 75 black job seekers who were interviewed once each by a black interviewer and a white interviewer. On all measures, black interviewers elicited greater linguistic elaboration than did white interviewers. It is concluded that the interview situation affects the black response in such encounters for whites are a source of anxiety, role behaviors are prescribed for blacks to enact, and distances are created between black and white by white society.

Effects of Counselor Attitudes and Behavior

Prejudice

"Effective" and "ineffective" groups of male student counselors in a NDEA Counseling and Guidance Institute were identified and the difference in prejudices were investigated twice (Milliken, 1965). Counseling practicum grades formed the basis for dichotomizing "effective" and "ineffective" counselors for the first investigation. Counselor supervisors rating was the basis for determining counselor effectiveness in the second investigation. The Bogardus Ethnic Distance Scale was used to measure prejudice attitudes. That prejudice is related to counseling effectiveness (practicum grades) was supported; however, counseling effectiveness (supervisor rankings) and prejudice were not significantly related, but the results were in the hypothesized direction.

Prior to counseling a black coached client, 30 counselor trainees in a practicum completed the Bogardus Ethnic Distance Scale and the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale to obtain rating on prejudice and dogmatism (Milliken & Patterson, 1967). Ratings of counselor behavior were made by the coached client and the supervisors of the counselor trainees by completing an experimental Counselor Effectiveness Scale following the interviews. Although the hypothesis that "good" counselors would have low rankings on prejudice and dogmatism, findings were only in the hypothesized direction and not significant. It was concluded that both prejudice and dogmatism may be factors to consider in successful counseling relationships.

Facilitative Functioning

In a study designed to determine the effects of counselor race and

training with black clients in initial interviews, four counselors--a black counselor and three white counselors--of varying amounts of experience and education, were assigned to see eight black undergraduate students (4 male and 4 female) in a counter-balanced design during consecutive weeks (Banks, Berenson & Carkhuff, 1967). Counselor performance was determined by independent rating of dimensions of interpersonal functioning: counselor empathy; counselor genuineness; counselor specificity of expression; and client depth of self-exploration. Also, the counselees assessed the counselor's level of functioning on a 50-item relationship inventory. The black counselor and two inexperienced white counselors functioned at higher levels than the experienced white Ph.D. trained in the more traditional trait-and-factor approach. All eight counselees stated that they would return to see the black counselor, but none indicated they would return to see the white Ph.D. When the data on the black counselor is disregarded, the authors state that "two-thirds of the counselees would not return to see a white counselor for a second session [Banks, Berenson, & Carkhuff, 1967, p. 72]."

The effect of client race on the empathic levels of 30 white counselors (doctoral students) were investigated (Welker, 1970). After basal empathy level was established (High and Low Empathic Counselors) by having counselors respond in writing to Carkhuff sixteen client stimulus expressions, counselors were randomly assigned to view and respond to one of two simulated counseling videos, one of a black and one of a white client. The clients, six black and six white girls who were matched

according to sex, socio-economic level, and dress, role played problems typical of preadolescents. Two raters used the Carkhuff Scale for Empathic Understanding to rate counselors' responses. None of the comparisons of "High Empathic" counselors' responses to problems role played by black clients and white clients reached significance. Significance was reached in two of the six tests concerning the comparison of mean empathy levels of "Low Empathic" counselors in that they responded significantly higher to black clients in these two comparisons. In reference to sex of counselor, male counselors responded significantly higher ($P<.01$) to black client than did female counselor although no significant differences in counselors' responses to white clients were based on sex. The findings suggest that the white counselors, at least from the population of counselors trained in offering the core conditions, are capable of offering the conditions of empathy to black as well as white clients.

Summary and Implications

Research studies on the effects of race in the counseling relationship have focused on the effects upon client and counselor performance.

The preference, attitudes, and satisfaction expressed by clients with counselors of different race among high school students, college students, and adults although mixed, tend to point in the direction of expressed preferences for counselors of same race particularly by black counselees. The ability of the counslor to communicate empathic understanding appears to be crucial regardless of racial considerations; however, empathic understanding when communicated by a counselor of the

same race, seem to result in greater depth of exploration on the part of black clients. Language elaboration has been found to be more extensive on the part of blacks in the presence of blacks than when in the presence of whites. The effects of race of counselor on client's behavioral outcomes, however, is less clear, suggesting that further research is indicated in this area. Briefly, studies devoted to effects of race of the counselor on blacks in regards to counselor preference, depth of client's exploration, linguistic elaboration, reporting for counseling behavior, and dialect and language preference, suggest that blacks tend to respond differently in the counseling relationship when in the presence of black counselors than when in the presence of white counselors. In the few studies, where white client subjects have been studied, it has been observed that white clients expressed a preference for white counselors (Tucker, 1969; Carkhuff & Banks, 1970; Eiben, 1970; Lehman, 1969). Empirical data on the effect of race upon the depth of self exploration of white counselees, however, is less clear and should be further investigated.

Studies concerned with the effects of client's race upon counselor performance are sparse. There is some evidence that the facilitative functioning of the counselor is affected by race of the client, but the studies are few and the findings are mixed and inconclusive. Limited evidence exists that prejudice is related to counseling effectiveness, but additional empirical data is needed to determine the combined effect of race and prejudice in one-to-one interpersonal relationships.

At least two theoretical view points seem to provide bases for considering the racial effects observed in mixed racial counseling relationships. It is possible that black counselors assume that black clients have had experiences similar to their own, and the same is conceivable for white counselors and white counselees. This would seem consistent with Fielder's (1951) theory of assumed similarity, the extent to which the counselor feels that his personal characteristics resemble those of the client. In mixed counseling relationships, the individual may be perceived as different, bringing a background of experiences that retard the identification process. Grosser (1967) seems to support the notion of assumed similarity when discussing the role and importance of nonprofessional personnel in manpower development programs.

> The indigenous nonprofessional is seen as having mutual interests and common cause with program participants, able to communicate freely with them, and because like them, he is poor, resides in the neighborhood, and shares minority group status, common background and language [Grosser cited by Gurin, 1968, p. 2].

Assumed similarity appears to be advocated by Thomas (1970) who indicates that black students prefer that the counselor be of the same race and as black in thinking and feeling as they.

The other theoretical point of view pertains to role theory and the role expectations generated in social encounter between blacks and whites. Traditional expectations of white society for blacks have generated role behaviors which often contributes to certain lack of openess, "gaming" and "telling the man what he would like to hear". Previous negative experiences with whites may produce both sensitivity and concealment of true feeling by blacks. Self disclosure, which is

basic to the counseling process, has been found to be greater among white than blacks.(Jourard & Laskow, 1958). The hesitance of blacks to fully disclose self,often viewed as "playing it cool", suggests a cautiousness and initial lack of trust in the person to whom one is to disclose. Under such circumstance, establishment of rapport with the counselee is more difficult which requires sensitive and skillful counselor intervention in order to facilitate authentic communication. Not only does the implications seem clear for educating and training more black for counseling functions, but selection procedures need to be reexamined and modified to increase the probability of selecting potential counselors who after training can offer the core conditions considered essential in counseling and therapy.

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